

Week Ending Friday, November 19, 2004

### **The President's Radio Address**

*November 13, 2004*

Good morning. Earlier this week, Prime Minister Allawi of Iraq authorized military operations to rid the city of Fallujah of Saddam holdouts and foreign terrorists. American marines and soldiers, alongside Iraqi security forces, are on the offensive against the killers who have been using Fallujah as a base of operations for terrorist attacks and who have held the local population in the grip of fear.

Fighting together, our forces have made significant progress in the last several days. They are taking back the city, clearing mosques of weapons and explosives stockpiled by insurgents, and restoring order for law-abiding citizens.

In the course of this operation, Iraqi troops have discovered new evidence of the enemy's brutality. An Iraqi general has described hostage slaughter houses, where terrorists have killed innocent victims and proudly recorded their barbaric crimes. The terrorists have shown once again the stakes of this struggle. They seek to spread fear and violence throughout Iraq, throughout the broader Middle East, and throughout the world, and they will fail. The terrorists will be defeated. Iraq will be free, and the world will be more secure. Our commitment to the success of democracy in Iraq is unshakable, and we will prevail.

Ultimately, Iraq must be able to defend itself, and Iraqi security forces are taking increasing responsibility for their country's security. As we see in Fallujah and as we saw in Najaf and elsewhere, Iraqi security forces are standing and fighting and risking their lives for the future of their nation. As terrorists have targeted these forces, still more brave Iraqis have come forward as volunteers. Today, nearly 115,000 trained and equipped Iraqi soldiers, police officers, and other security personnel are serving their

country. The Iraqi Government is on track to meet its goal of fielding more than 200,000 security personnel by the end of next year.

In January, the Iraqi people will elect a transitional National Assembly, which will draft a new constitution to prepare the way for the election of a permanent Iraqi Government. The Iraqi people, like the people of Afghanistan before them, are embracing a democratic future even in the face of threats and intimidation. Throughout the country, Iraqi men and women are registering to vote; political parties are forming; candidates for office are stepping forward.

International support for the Iraqi election is essential, and that support continues to grow. Military forces from some 30 nations are working alongside Iraqi forces, helping to establish stability and security. A U.N. team is providing critical technical support to Iraq's independent electoral commission. Other diplomatic personnel are helping the Iraqi people prepare for those elections to be held on schedule in January.

As those elections draw near, the desperation of the killers will grow, and the violence could escalate. The success of democracy in Iraq would be a crushing blow to the forces of terror, and the terrorists know it. The defeat of terror in Iraq will set that nation on a course to lasting freedom and will give hope to millions, and the Iraqi people know it. And a free, democratic Iraq will inspire reformers throughout the Middle East and make America more secure.

The United States and our allies have shown our determination to help Iraqis achieve their liberty. We will continue to stand by our friends, and we will finish the job.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:50 p.m. on November 12 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 13. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November

12 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

### **Statement on the Resignation of Colin L. Powell as Secretary of State**

*November 15, 2004*

Colin Powell is one of the great public servants of our time. He is a soldier, a diplomat, a civic leader, a statesman, and a great patriot. I value his friendship. He will be missed. On behalf of all Americans, I thank him for his many years of service, and I wish him and Alma all the best.

In his 4 years as Secretary of State, Colin forged new alliances that are helping America win the war on terror and reinvigorated old and honored friendships. He has helped to build two great coalitions that have liberated more than 50 million people in Afghanistan and Iraq from brutal dictators and which are now helping those nations emerge as successful democracies. He was a key architect of the Broader Middle East Initiative, which is helping to spread freedom and democracy in that region.

His diplomatic skills also helped to end regional conflicts and lower tensions on the Indian subcontinent. Through his advocacy, he focused the world's attention on the plight of the suffering in Sudan, Liberia, and Haiti. His role in resolving the EP-3 incident early in my administration showed the calm judgment and steady resolve he has brought to our foreign policy. Thousands of dedicated foreign policy professionals are grateful for his leadership in modernizing and strengthening the Department of State.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also made available Secretary Powell's letter of resignation.

### **Statement on the Resignation of Roderick R. Paige as Secretary of Education**

*November 15, 2004*

Rod Paige has been at the forefront of fundamentally reforming and improving our Nation's public education system so that no child is left behind in America. His passion for taking on the status quo and fighting for reform underscores his strong commitment to our country's young people and his desire to give them a brighter future. Throughout his life, Rod has overcome great obstacles and achieved great success. He represents the best of America.

We have only begun the long-term transformation of education so that future generations can enjoy all of the promise and opportunity America has to offer. Thanks to the hard work of Rod Paige, we have a very strong start and are well on our way to fulfilling that promise.

I am thankful for Rod's leadership during this important time and am grateful for his friendship. I wish him all the best.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also made available Secretary Paige's letter of resignation.

### **Statement on the Resignation of Spencer Abraham as Secretary of Energy**

*November 15, 2004*

Spence Abraham has been a valued member of the Cabinet and a strong and steady leader of the Department of Energy. He helped develop our National Energy Policy to reduce our country's reliance on foreign sources of energy and to provide reliable, affordable, and environmentally sound energy for America's future. He launched new technological research initiatives that will lead to the next generation of pollution-free automobiles and clean coal powerplants. In the war on terror, Spence Abraham played a pivotal role in keeping the most dangerous